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ABSTRACT

On the whole, members of racial minorities and low-income groups are less likely to do well in school and in the job market. This paper contends that the integration of multicultural education into the curricula of rural colleges and universities in the south may provide an environment that allows for some degree of equal opportunity among minority students. In the debate over the role of American educational institutions in the quest for justice and equality, one school of thought holds that the primary function of schooling has been the perpetuation of the core values held by society's dominant ideological group. This critiques illustrated by the case of the rural South. The South, especially the rural South, exhibits a distinct set of values that makes up the "selective tradition" in the curriculum and influences the "common sense" responses of graduates of Southern schools. This distinctiveness centers on race relations, religious influences, and nativistic attitudes. Multicultural education attempts to reform the educational structure through changes in favored learning styles, sanctioned languages and dialects, teaching materials, as well as moving the norms that permeate the school environment toward ethnic diversity using multicultural education as a "selective tradition" in the curriculum may counteract the overt and covert imposition of status quo ideologies and ameliorate the poor educational and employment outcomes of minority groups. This paper contains 101 references. (SV)

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A CASE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION INTO THE CURRICULA OF SMALL SOUTHERN RURAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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A CASE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION INTO THE CURRICULA OF SMALL SOUTHERN RURAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

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The role of American educational institutions in the continous quest for justice and equality may indeed be seen as an interminable debate. Much of that debate seems to be centered around the relationship of the formal educational institutions to the workplace especially with respect to the positions of racial and ethnic minorities. In fact Carnoy and Levin contend that these institutional resemblances bear some striking contrasts and that "....these resemblances are no mere accident --.....On the whole, members of racial minorities and low-income groups are less likely to do well in school, and they are also less likely to do well in the job market" (1985:1). This paper hypothesizes that there is a distinctiveness in the South, and moreso, the rural South, and that that distinctiveness accounts for the 'selective tradition' in the curriculum so much so that it influences the 'common sense' approach made by those who are products of the educational system in the rural South. Three factors, viz., race relations, religion, and nativism, which act as cultural constraints to the integration of multicultural education into the curricula of small, rural Southern colleges and universities, are singled out for special treatment. The position taken in this paper is that the integration of multicultural education into the curricula of rural Southern colleges and universities may provide an environment that allows for some degree of equal opportunity among minorities involved in the educational process.

Continuing in the quest for justice and equality, the ensuing debate concerning the role of American educational institutions is largely represented by two predominant schools of thought. On the one side, there is contention that the role of the school should be viewed as independent of any external objectives, particularly that of the workplace (Holt: 1964; Cremin: 1964; Dewey: 1966; Graham: 1967; and Kozol: 1972). Indeed, schooling should be seen as purely a moral undertaking which would cause its recipients to socially engineer the changes in society necessary to bring about an equalitarian environment. Dewey postured that if the educational process was conceived of in this way, then eventually the workplace and the rest of the society will be impacted upon by those who would cause "....a projection in the type of society we would like to realize, and by forming minds in accord with it gradually modify the larger and more recalcitrant features of the adult society" (1966: 317). Unfortunately, many of those who ideally supported Dewey's position (Goodman: 1956, 1964; Friedenberg: 1963; Holt: 1964; Kozol: 1967, et al), were somewhat persuaded to accept the harsh reality that schooling "....reflected the values of a dehumanized, mechanical, technological, and racist society" (Carnoy and Levin, 1985: 1), in a large part attributed to the dilemma of African-American children under the tutelage of racist white teachers (Kozol, 1967).

On the other side, there is a school of thought which sees schooling as an integral factor in the continuing inequality in society exemplified par excellence in the workplace. Most representative of that school of thought are Parsons (1959);

Inkeles (1966); Dreeben (1968); Althusser (1971); Baudelot and Establet (1971); Carnoy (1974); Carnoy and Levin (1976a); Bowles and Gintis (1976); and Bourdieu and Passeron (1979). Schooling is viewed by this school as a means to an end (Dreeben, 1968: 114-132). Althusser's work is not only an analysis of how formal educational institutions mirror the workplace but is a sophisticated theory of the insidious ideological relationship between the workplace and formal education institutions:

> ....the educational system determines not only the way people work (the norms, values, and conceptions of society), but also what they do; and both are in turn determined in conformity with the class structure of society and class relations....Teacher-student relations, curriculum, the class divisions in school -- all are determined by the class structure of capitalist society (Carnoy and Levin, 1985: 21).

Althusser's work is somewhat energized in the analysis of Bowles and Gintis who see educational institutions as not only mirroring the objective socio-economic and political realities of society, but as serving principally the purpose of 'properly' socializing its clientelle for integration into the already established social stratification moulds. Micheal Apple (1979; 1982a; 1982b) and Henry Giroux push Bowles and Gintis' position to greater parameters in contending that schooling must be viewed as intimately involved in fabricating an environment in which ideological hegemony is maintained and, as such, must be viewed as cultural institutions. The primary function of schooling is then seen as the perpetuation of the pervasive core of values that are held by the dominant ideological group of the society. Accordingly, Apple concludes that any analysis of the effects of schooling must come to terms with the concepts of ideology, hegemony, and the selective tradition which are the primary

functions of the curriculum (1979: 6). Raymond Williams, building on Antonio Gramsci's work in a conceptual piece entitled, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," summarizes rather pellucidly, the relationships of ideology and hegemony and the manner in which ideological hegemony is perpetuated through the selective tradition in the curricula of educational institutions:

> ....The notion of hegemony as deeply saturating the consciousness of a society seems to be fundamental....It is a set of meanings and values which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute....But this is not, except in the operation of a moment of abstract analysis, a static system. On the contrary, we can only understand an effective and dominant culture if we understand the real social process on which it depends....The educational institutions are usually the main agencies of transmission of an effective dominant culture, and this is now a major economic as well as cultural activity; indeed it is both in the same moment. Moreover, at the philosophical level, at the true level of the theory and at the level of the history of various practices there is a process which I call the **selective tradition**: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as 'the tradition,' **the** significant past...." (1976: 204-205).

The position taken by Williams presents some serious implications for the curriculum. Put rather thirstly, the content of the curriculum is neither apolitical nor value free but is rather "....selected and organized around sets of principles and values that come from somewhere, that represents particular views of normality and deviance, of good and bad, and of what 'good people act like'" (Apple, 1979: 63). These sets of principles and values form what Pierre Bourdieu (1971) calls "legitimate knowledge" or the common knowledge which everyone should come to possess. Propagation of this 'hidden knowledge' is largely covert and executed through what is euphemistically referred to as the "hidden curriculum" (Johnson,

1968), comprised principally of "....norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively, taught in schools and that are not usually talked about in teachers' statements of ends or goals" (Apple, 1979: 84). The 'hidden curriculum' perpetuates the culture of the dominant ideological group in society.

The relationship between education and culture raises some fundamental issues not only with regard to the nature of the relationship but also just how much or what specific aspects of the dominant ideology is transmitted both overtly and covertly through the educational system by the curriculum and how do these specific aspects come to be included in the curriculum. Among those who have written extensively on the cultural transmission function of education (Herskovits, 1927; Mead, 1931, 1951; Benedict, 1943; Boas, 1945; Spindler, 1955, 1959, 1963; Kluckhohn, 1957, 1962, 1963; Montagu, 1958; Redfield, 1962; Bernstein, 1975; et al), there is an underlying theme, viz., education may be seen as an enculturation process, inter alia, and as so aptly put by Carnoy, schools "....transfer culture and values and they channel children into various social roles" (1974: 8). But that cultural transference is only 'minimal' or 'functional' transference (Foster, 1969; Mattai, 1977) executed through a special process:

> ...., there is a process which I call the **selective tradition**: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as the 'the tradition,' **the** significant past. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are neglected and excluded. Even more crucially, some of these meanings are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture (Williams, 1976: 205).

But who decides what will comprise that 'selective tradition' and how is it included in the curriculum and transferred to those who become clients of the educational institutions? Apple sees this 'selective tradition' which creeps into the curriculum as invariably being the work of specialists in the area of curriculum development acting under the notion of social control (1979: 46) and emanating from "....ideological and economic presuppositions which provide common sense rules for educators' thought and action" (ibid., p. 46). While these curriculum specialists may not be necessarily engaged in consciously pertetuating an ideological hegemony, nevertheless, their actions are manifestations of a frame of thought of an enculturating process of which they are products resultant in "....assumptions and practices about teaching and learning, normal and abnormal behavior, important and unimportant knowledge,....[which] have latent functions....some things that many educators are not usually aware of" (ibid., p. 64). Bullivant's description of these 'knowledge managers' role and function with respect to the curriculum describes the pervasiveness of the 'selective tradition':

> ....Schools and other enculturating agencies employ a curriculum as their main strategy for ordering the selection of knowledge for which they are responsible. Among the many aspects of the curriculum which are considered, that of the selection process itself is crucial. It entails 'knowledge managers' of various kinds coming to value-based decisions about the type of society which the education system serves....All decisions inevitably involve control over the type of knowledge to be transmitted, to whom, under what conditions and so on....(1981: lx).

The position taken in this paper is that the integration of multicultural education into the curricula of rural Southern colleges and universities may provide an environment that allows for some

degree of equal opportunity among minorities involved in the educational process. If, as was discussed earlier in this paper, the curriculum in educational institutions allows for the imposition (both overtly and covertly) of an ideological hegemony supportive of the status quo so much so that "....these institutional resemblances are no mere accident -....[where] members of racial minorities and low-income groups are less likely to do well in school, and they are also less likely to do well in the job market" (Carnoy and Levin, 1985: 1); then, it is my conviction that should multicultural education be included as a 'selective tradition' into the curriculum, it may cause an amelioration of those outcomes referred to by Carnoy and Levin.

Multicultural education is not without criticism but is viewed by many as a politically loaded concept and, therefore, viewed with suspicion. Bullivant sees it as yet another avenue in which an ideological hegemony may be enforced through the curriculum since it often "....emphasizes only lifestyles, in a safe, bland, and politically neutral panacea" (1981: 1x). However, this need not be the case as has been suggested by several scholars in the area of multicultural education (Banks, 1973, 1977a, 1977b, 1978, 1986, 1987, 1989; Greenbaum, 1974; Ramirez and Castaneda, 1974; Garcia, 1976; Longstreet, 1978; Ogbu, 1978; Sizemore, 1979, Gay, 1983; Gollnick and Churin, 1983). Banks' response to the criticisms against multicultural education provides a useful framework and lends support for the integration of multicultural education into the curricula of rural Southern colleges and universities. Summed up rather succintly,

Banks sees the main criticisms against multicultural education as coming from two distinct antithetical sources:

> The radicals criticize multicultural education because they believe that it fails to promote structural reform of societal institutions. The conservatives criticize it because they perceive it as a threat to the status quo, are afraid that it will reinterpret the national experience, create balkanization, help to splinter the nation, and prevent minority youths from developing the skills needed to participate in national civic culture. Radical scholars criticize multicultural education for not doing what the conservatives are afraid it will achieve: significant reform of the social structure (1986: 223).

Banks strongly suggests that multicultural education attempts to bring about total reform in the educational structure especially through redirection in "....learning styles favored by the school, the languages and dialects that are sanctioned, the teaching materials and the norms toward ethnic diversity that permeate the school environment" (ibid.: 226). Essentially, Banks' contention is that both the overt and covert aspects of the curriculum, the 'selective tradition,' should be so designed that those who come into intimate contact with it may then develop that 'commonsense' response suggested by Apple. In response to the radical critics of multicultural education, educational institutions may undergo a thorough reform, particularly through curriculum development, thereby enabling students "....to develop more democratic attitudes by creating....environments that promote cultural democracy....[and] reinforce democratic social and political movements that take place beyond the school walls and thus contribute in important ways to the elimination of institutional racism and structural inequality" (ibid.: 226).

THE CASE OF THE RURAL SOUTH

There is a fairly influential group of scholars who contend that there is a certain 'distinctiveness' about the South (Odum, 1947; Reed, 1974, 1982, 1983; Woodward, 1968; Dabbs, 1958, Dykeman and Stokely, 1957; et al.). Support for this 'distintiveness' comes from two different perspectives. On the one hand, it is felt that the Vanderbilt Agrarians contributed very much to this position by what William Nichols sees as their having "....place in bold relief important elements of the Southern tradition" (1960: 8). What is clearly preferred is a status quo position in which any perceived changes could only become manifest on their terms (Odum, 1947; Cash, 1956; Rubin and Kilpatrick, 1957; Dabbs, 1958). On the other hand, there is an exogamous factor that indirectly contributed to the maintenance of that distinctiveness. Reed (1983: 110-111), citing Barth's classical piece on "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" (1969), contends that, in addition to the endogamous cultural factors of a group, the "continuing dichotomization" between members of the group and outsiders are also important in determining the identity of the group. Therefore,

> ....As long as **non-Southerners** think of Southerners as 'different'---whether because they **are** different or because non-Southerners have learned to think that way for some other reason---Southerners,...., will be pushed to think in those terms as well (Reed, 1983: 110).

The position taken in this paper is that there a distinctiveness in the South and, moreso, in the rural South and that that distinctiveness makes up the 'selective tradition' in the curriculum, and, as such, influences that 'common sense' response made by those who are products of the educational system in the rural South. Three

factors are singled out for special treatment in this paper, viz., race relations, religion, and nativism.

The noted American historian, U. B. Phillips, noted that one may very well conclude that the focal point of Southern history is the great determination to preserve the white man's country (1928). Edgar Thompson, however, is more emphatic about the place that race relations hold in Southern culture:

> ....The idea of race is like a condition that was written into the lease at the time of creation governing relations among men who were allowed to inhabit the earth. It came into the South,..., to do duty as an absolute, as a symbol more effective and lasting than language or religion to ensure the continued economic, political, and social security of the classes of high status (1975: 297).

The very way in which race operated in the social structure determined both its potency and entrenched position. Despite some attempts at gradual modification of the social structure, the society is still basically plagued with a rigid dual stratification, viz., horizontally that segments the society into rural and urban categories, and vertically that segments the society into two broad categories of black and white. But this rigid dual stratification is not altogether separate and distinct; rural values influence urban thought processes (Glazer, 1970, 1982; Goldfield, 1982; Lieberman, 1982; Baker, Steed, and Moreland, 1983; Farley, 1987; Miller and Pozetta (eds.), 1988; et al.).

While there is some indication that there is some softening of the unfavorable race-relations situations in the south (Wilson, 1970), there is even greater evidence which purports the hardening of such a situation. Farley indicates that there is still a noticeable disparity in the economic positions and occupational levels between

African-Americans and whites in the South (1987) and even more pronounced between African-Americans and whites who live in the rural areas (Mezey, 1983; Baker, Steed, and Moreland, 1983; Perkins, Fairchild, and Havens, 1983; Williamson, 1984). Anderson describes rather aptly the seeming misconception:

> ....., progressive beliefs in the South are not indicative of any major improvement in race relations there. Undaunted optimism that a radically changed system of race-relations has emerged in the South is a naive interpretation of the liberal belief. And, expressions of racial tolerance on the part of dominant groups can certainly not be taken as indication that Blacks will make rapid progress in the South....So, although prejudice may not be as rampant in the South as it was in the past, we should not fool ourselves in thinking that the South is now on the dawn of racial tranquiltiy (1984: 261).

But if unfavorable race-relations seem to be endemic to the rural South, it is only because it finds complementarity with the way in which religion is practiced (Rosenbert, 1989). According to one of the most noted scholars on religion in the South:

> ....Christian religion has, perhaps more than any other force, operated to transform a heterogeneous aggregate into a homogeneous society binding together its segments and separate institutions and to build and preserve the morale of the people. It has helped the system take over the children of all classes, keep them in their proper stations, enforce conformity to old customs, and preserve the order of power relations (1972: 80).

Religion, then, not only functions as a spiritual activity in the South (and moreso, the rural South), but is in essence a fulfillment of "....the secular purpose of molding the social order" (Dillon, 1961: 516). Further, it does so rather conservatively reinforcing the social order of the dominant ideological group rather than agitate for social change. Ezzel sees churches in the South as "....[butressing] a conservative social philosophy with an orthodox theology" (1963: 346) while Hill sees "the teachings of the Bible, the preservation of

the Southern way of life, and the region's convictions about the good society [are] seen as closely linked" (1983: 405). The relationship of religion and the society becomes immutable so much so that 'Religion is saying no more to society than society is saying to itself" (Manschreck, 1959: 89).

Nativism is used rather loosely in this paper to refer to the xenophobic responses of Southerners (particularly the rural Southerners) to exogamous cultural and social factors which they feel will undermine the homogeneity of their social structure (Billington, 1938; Overdyke, 1950; Baker, 1977; Shankman, 1982; Higham, 1988; Miller, 1989). Religion and race-relations buttressed nativistic responses in the South. Compared to the Northern part of the country,

> ....While competing groups, conflict resolution, and accomodation usually described the ethnic political patterns in the North, the South evolved a different system. In this region....society was rigidly split between only two groups--Whites and Blacks (Miller and Pozetta, 1988: 45).

Quan and Roebuck note that immigrant groups are placed in either one of those categories and in cases where the immigrant is placed in the 'Black' group, he/she is relegated to a position of inferiority (1982: 42-51). But this does not mean that other immigrants who are placed in the 'White' group are accorded similar privileges as the Anglo-Saxon Southerner. The frequent violent attacks waged upon Jews and Italians and the notorious lynching of Leo Frank in 1915 are manifestations of the Anglo-Saxon Southerners' refusal to even see white immigrants as their equals (Bayer, 1988; Williamson, 1984). In more recent times, the large influx of Asian, Latin American, African, and Caribbean immigrant groups have reactivated the nativistic sentiments and the responses are being made in the form of increased

support for harsher restrictions on legislation regarding immigration and vociferous articulation of English-only laws (Pozetta, 1988). In essence, the nativistic sentiments are manifestations of the "....relative absence of diversity - ethnic, religious, ideological, political, and otherwise" in the South (Hill, 1984: 198). Nativistic sentiments persist only because the dominant ideological group ensures that all thoughts and action in the society would conform to the normative pattern and thereby perserve the status quo. In a real sense, nativistic sentiments allow for the perpetuation of a homogeneous society and, in the case of the rural South, they allow for an entire way of life using religion and particular race-relations responses (Anderson, 1984: 202-203).

THE CHALLENGE TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE RURAL SOUTH

Banks has taken the position that multicultural education could become effective if educational institutions undergo a radical transformation particularly through curriculum reform. Thompson is also very optimistic that education offers the only hope for the unshackling of those cultural constraints in the South but emphatically qualifies his position by stating that "not much can be expected from the uninspired and routine type of education now being dispensed in the rural schools of the South" (1975: 282).

I share the optimism of both Banks and Thompson, but I am convinced that the process of reform must be more far-reaching. While it is important to reform the curricula of schools in the rural South so as to hasten "the elimination of institutional racism and structural inequality" (Banks, 1986: 226), it is perhaps equally (if not more) important to re-educate the adults in the community

(especially those) who are responsible for that 'selective tradition' referred to by Apple and Bullivant. This is indeed necessary for that 'commonsense response' to take place as alluded to by Apple. Of greater importance, however, is the need for higher educational institutions to become involved in the agitation and implementation of change rather than to stand back and be asked to effect change as a result of political pressure. Alexander Heard, formerly of the University of North Carolina, states rather succintly the plight of higher educational institutions which do not see themselves in the vanguard of change:

> ...The problem...has been taken over by the politicians and have tended to exploit it for the purposes not always connected with a concern for wise social and educational policy. The problem belongs with the politicians all right, but not with them alone. The debate could be found quicker, in other forums....It is clear the universities have joined but little in the discussion (Sarratt, 1966: 150).

It seems to me, that in addition to the university community taking an active part to reform its own curriculum and creating an environment conducive to the development and reinforcement of cultural democracy within its own campus, it may also usurp the services of its continuing education units in causing a much wider reform. Such units may be instrumental in working with churches, business organizations, civic clubs, political organizations, etc., in the area of programmatic planning aimed at a reconsideration of cultural traditions of the rural South. This process may eventually lead to the development of "more democratic attitudes by creating environments that promote cultural democracy....[and] reinforce democratic social and political movements...and thus contribute in important ways to the elimination of institutional racism and structural inequality" (Banks,

1986: 226). Hopefully, this process may lead to a new 'selective tradition' that causes a 'common sense' response that departs from the present hegemony which acts of a formidable barrier to cultural diversity.

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